

Newcastle School

Student Handbook

2008-2009

“Enter to learn.
Go forth to serve.”

NOTICES REGARDING DIRECTORY INFORMATION AND PARENT'S RESPONSE REGARDING RELEASE OF STUDENT INFORMATION

State law requires the district to give you the following information:

Certain information about district students is considered directory information and will be released to anyone who follows the procedures for requesting the information unless the parent or guardian objects to the release of the directory information about the student. If you do not want Newcastle ISD to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the district in writing by September 12, 2008.

This means that the district must give certain personal information (called "directory information") about your child to any person who requests it, unless you have told the District in writing not to do so. In addition, you have the right to tell the district that it may, or may not, use certain personal information about your child for specific school-sponsored purposes. The district is providing you this form so you can communicate your wishes about these issues.

For the following school-sponsored purposes: [student directory, student yearbook, or district publication] Newcastle ISD has designated the following information as directory information.

- **Student's name**
- **Address**
- **Telephone listing**
- **Date and place of birth**
- **Degrees, honors, and awards received**
- **Dates of attendance**
- **Grade level**
- **Photograph**
- **Participation in officially recognized activities and sports**
- **Weight and height, if a member of an athletic team**

Directory information identified only for limited school-sponsored purposes remains otherwise confidential and will not be released to the public without the consent of the parent or eligible student.

Parent: Please circle one of the choices below:

I, parent of _____ (student's name), **(do give) (do not give)** the district permission to use the information in the above list for the specified school-sponsored purposes.

Parent signature _____ Date _____

For all other purposes, Newcastle ISD has designated the following information as directory information:

- **Student's name**
- **Degrees, honors, and awards received**
- **Dates of attendance**
- **Grade level**
- **Participation in officially recognized activities and sports**
- **Weight and height, if a member of an athletic team**

Parent: Please circle one of the choices below:

I, parent of _____ (student's name), **(do give) (do not give)** the district permission to release the information in this list in response to request unrelated to school-sponsored purposes.

Parent signature _____ Date _____

**PARENT'S RESPONSE REGARDING RELEASE OF
INFORMATION TO MILITARY RECRUITERS AND INSTITUTIONS
OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

Federal law requires that the district release to military recruiters and institutions of higher education, upon request, the name, address, and phone number of secondary school students enrolled in the district, unless the parent or eligible student directs the district not to release information to these types of requestors without prior written consent. (See **Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education** on page 9 for more information.)

Parent: Please complete the following only if you do not want your child's information released to a military recruiter or an institution of higher education without your prior consent.

I, parent of _____ (*student's name*) requests that the District **not** release my child's name, address, and telephone number to a military recruiter or institutions of higher education upon their request without my prior written consent.

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

CONSENT/OPT-OUT FORM

To the Parents of _____:

The district is required by federal law to notify you and obtain your consent or denial (opt-out) for your child to participate in certain school activities. The activities include any student survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns one or more of the following eight areas, known as "protected information surveys."

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility or to receive financial assistance under such a program.

This requirement also applies to the collection, disclosure, or use of student information for marketing purposes ("marketing surveys"), and certain physical exams and screenings.

Following are activities requiring parental notice and consent or opt-out for the 2007–2008 school year. Please note that this notice and authority to consent transfer from the parent to the student when the student reaches 18 or is an emancipated minor under state law.

-
- Learning Style Survey on approximately October 1, 2008.
 - Effective Schools Survey for grades 7-12 on approximately October 27, 2008.
 - School Climate Survey for grades K-6 on or about November 3, 2008.
 - Safe School Survey for grades 7-12 on or about December 8, 2008.

If you wish to review any survey instrument or instructional material used in connection with any protected information or marketing survey, please submit a request to Gayle Bailey at 505 Washington, Newcastle, Texas 76372. Gayle Bailey will notify you of the time and place where you may review these materials. You have the right to review a survey and/or instructional materials before the survey is administered to a student.

I, _____ (parent's name), give my consent for _____ (child's name) to participate in the following surveys (check those for which you give consent):

- Effective Schools Survey for grades 7-12 on approximately October 27, 2008
- School Climate Survey for grades K-6 on approximately November 3, 2008
- Learning Style Survey on approximately October 2, 2008
- Safe Schools Survey for grades 7-12 on approximately December 8, 2008

Parent's signature

ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

My child and I have received a copy of the Newcastle ISD Student Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct for 2008–2009. I understand that the handbook contains information that my child and I may need during the school year and that all students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in the Code.

Print name of student: _____

Signature of student: _____

Signature of parent: _____

Date: _____

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PREFACE

To Students and Parents:

Welcome to school year 2008–2009! Education is a team effort, and we know that students, parents, teachers, and other staff members all working together can make this a wonderfully successful year for our students.

The **Newcastle ISD** Student Handbook is designed to provide a resource for some of the basic information that you and your child will need during the school year. In an effort to make it easier to use, the handbook is divided into two sections:

Section I—REQUIRED NOTICES AND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS—with notices that the district must provide to all parents, as well as other information to assist you in responding to school-related issues. We encourage you to take some time to closely review this section of the handbook; and

Section II—INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS —organized alphabetically by topic for quick access when searching for information on a specific issue.

Please be aware that the term “the student’s parent” is used to refer to the parent, legal guardian, or any other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student.

Both students and parents should become familiar with the **Newcastle ISD *Student Code of Conduct***, which is a document adopted by the board and intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere for learning. That document may be found as a separate document that may be sent home to parents and is available in the principal’s office and online at <http://www.newcastle-isd.net/>.

The **student handbook** is designed to be in harmony with board policy and the ***Student Code of Conduct***. The ***Student Code of Conduct*** is policy that supercedes the ***Student Handbook***. Please be aware that the handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy or other rules that affect student handbook provisions will be made available to students and parents through newsletters and other communications.

In case of conflict between board policy or the ***Student Code of Conduct*** and any provisions of the **student handbook**, the provisions of board policy or the ***Student Code of Conduct*** that were most recently adopted by the board are to be followed.

After reading through the entire handbook with your child, keep it as a reference during this school year. If you or your child has questions about any of the material in this handbook, please contact the principal.

Also, please complete and return to your child’s campus the following required forms included in this handbook or provided in the forms packet accompanying this handbook:

1. Parental Acknowledgment Form;
2. Student Directory Information Form;

3. Release of Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Learning Forms; and
4. Consent/Opt-Out Forms.

[See **Obtaining Information and Protecting Student Rights** on page 2 and **Directory Information** on page 8 for more information.]

Please note that references to policy codes are included so that parents can refer to current board policy. A copy of the district's policy manual is available for review in the school office or online at www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/252902.

Newcastle ISD Board of Trustees

Tommy Dee Taylor, President

Bruce Bailey, Vice President

Mary Beth Jordan, Secretary

Kerry Lowe

LaFonda Taack

Carla Short

Thomas Spurlin

Administration

Superintendent

Gordon Grubbs

Principal

Cathryn Creel

Assistant Principal

Ty Spitzer

NEWCASTLE HIGH SCHOOL

School Colors:

Green and White

Mascot:

Bobcat

School Song:

To Newcastle High we pledge our hearts
Forever to be true
For all the things we stand for
We'll always strive to do
The friends we make
While living here
Will last our whole lives through
To Newcastle High and our school
We pledge our hearts anew.

Fight Song:

Fight, Bobcats, Fight!
Fight, Bobcats Fight!
Fight for the school you love so dearly.
You'll hit 'em high, you'll hit 'em low.
You'll push the ball across the goal,
Cats, Fight! Fight!
We'll praise your name
Boost you to fame
Fight for the green and white.
You'll hit 'em
You'll wreck 'em
Hit 'em, wreck 'em, cats!
And the victory bells will ring out.

Vision Statement and Goals

Board of Trustees

Newcastle Independent School District

Vision March 13, 2008

The **vision** of the Board of Trustees for Newcastle Independent School District is that we are committed to each individual student's achievement by providing a challenging and encouraging educational experience

Goals May 19, 2008

Goal 1 – The Board of Trustees of Newcastle Independent School District and administration will provide all students the necessary support and maximum opportunities to become successful students in their chosen endeavors.

Performance Indicators

- 1.1 The district will promote and encourage academic excellence.
- 1.2 The district will continue to encourage student success.
- 1.3 The district will embrace the belief that “all students can learn”.
- 1.4 The district will promote a safe and friendly learning environment for each individual student.
- 1.5 The district will provide the resources and support for a successful athletic program.

Goal 2 – The Board of Trustees of Newcastle Independent School District will support the actions of the administration and professional staff to develop a curriculum and effective instructional strategies that prepare students for academic success and their post-secondary endeavors.

Performance Indicators

- 2.1 The district will provide increased opportunities for “life experiences” throughout the curriculum.
- 2.2 The district will continue to maintain an instructional focus.
- 2.3 SAT scores will improve when compared to previous years.
- 2.4 The district will provide the support for all students to be reading at grade level by 3rd grade.

Goal 3 – The Board of Trustees of Newcastle Independent School District will employ, support, and retain highly-qualified administrators, faculty, and staff to respond to the personnel needs of the district.

Performance Indicators

- 3.1 The district will employ teachers who are fully certified and who demonstrate a caring attitude toward students.

Goal 4 – The Board of Trustees of Newcastle Independent School District and administration will encourage parents, community members, and alumni to be active participants in the education of Newcastle students.

Performance Indicators

- 4.1 The district will examine various strategies and approaches to increase the student population including cooperating with city officials for advertising and recruiting families to the district and city.
- 4.2 The district will initiate the formation of a school and community development committee.
- 4.3 The district will investigate the formation of a foundation to provide continued financial support for the district.

Goal 5 – The Board of Trustees of Newcastle Independent School District and administration will provide for the efficient and effective operation of facilities and grounds that are conducive to a safe and positive teaching and learning environment.

Performance Indicators

- 5.1 The district will continue facility and grounds improvements and investigate the feasibility of a new elementary campus by developing a multi-year facilities improvement plan.

SECTION I: REQUIRED NOTICES AND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

This section of the Newcastle ISD Student Handbook includes several notices that the district is required to provide to you, as well as other information on topics of particular interest to you as a parent.

STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination, Newcastle ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

The following district staff members have been designated to coordinate compliance with these legal requirements:

- Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex: Gordon Grubbs at 940-846-3531.
- Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: Cathryn Creel at 940-846-3531.
- All other concerns regarding discrimination: See the superintendent Gordon Grubbs at 940-846-3531.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Working Together

Both experience and research tell us that a child's education succeeds best when there is good communication and a strong partnership between home and school. Your involvement in this partnership may include:

- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child on a daily basis to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.
- Becoming familiar with all of your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district.
- Discussing with the counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.
- Reviewing the requirements of the graduation programs with your child, if your child is entering ninth grade.

- Monitoring your child’s academic progress and contacting teachers as needed. [See **Academic Counseling** on page 18 and **Academic Programs** on page 13.]
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, counselor, or principal, please call the school office at 940-846-3531 for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call or meet with you during his or her conference period or before or after school. [See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 39.]
- Becoming a school volunteer. [For further information, see policies at GKG and contact Gayle Bailey at 940-846-3531.]
- Participating in campus parent organizations. Parent organizations include: Newcastle Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO) and Newcastle Athletic Booster Club.
- Serving as a parent representative on the district/campus planning committee (Newcastle ISD Campus Educational Improvement Committee), assisting in the development of educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. For further information, see policies at BQA and BQB, and contact Cathryn Creel at 940-846-3531.
- Serving on the School Health Advisory Council, assisting the district in ensuring local community values are reflected in health education instruction. [See policies at BDF, EHAA, FFA, and information in this handbook at **School Health Advisory Council** on page 32 and contact Ty Spitzer at 940-846-3531.]
- Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations. [See policies at BE and BED for more information.]

PARENTAL RIGHTS

Obtaining Information and Protecting Student Rights

Your child will not be required to participate without parental consent in any survey, analysis, or evaluation—funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education—that concerns:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent.
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student’s family.
- Sexual behavior or attitudes.
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior.
- Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship.
- Relationships privileged under law, such as relationships with lawyers, physicians, and ministers.
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents.

- Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student’s eligibility to participate in a special program or to receive financial assistance under such a program.

You will be able to inspect the survey or other instrument and any instructional materials used in connection with such a survey, analysis, or evaluation. [For further information, see policy EF(LEGAL).]

“Opting Out” of Surveys and Activities

As a parent, you have a right to receive notice of and deny permission for your child’s participation in:

- Any survey concerning the private information listed above, regardless of funding.
- School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from your child for the purpose of marketing or selling that information.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by the school in advance and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student. Exceptions are hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law. [See policies EF and FFAA.]

Displaying a Student’s Artwork and Projects

As a parent, you have a right to provide consent before the district can display your child’s artwork, special projects, photographs taken by your child, and the like on the district’s Web site, in printed material, by video, or by any other method of mass communication.

Requesting Professional Qualifications of Teachers and Staff

You may request information regarding the professional qualifications of your child’s teachers, including whether a teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction; whether the teacher has an emergency permit or other provisional status for which state requirements have been waived; and undergraduate and graduate degree majors, graduate certifications, and the field of study of the certification or degree. Information concerning (Highly Qualified) status of your child’s teacher is included online at <http://www.newcastle-isd.net/>. You also have the right to request information about the qualifications of any paraprofessional who may provide services to your child.

Reviewing Instructional Materials

As a parent, you have a right to review teaching materials, textbooks, and other teaching aids and instructional materials used in the curriculum, and to examine tests that have been administered to your child.

Inspecting Surveys

As a parent, you may inspect a survey created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed to your child.

Accessing Student Records

You may review your child's student records. These records include:

- Attendance records,
- Test scores,
- Grades,
- Disciplinary records,
- Counseling records,
- Psychological records,
- Applications for admission,
- Health and immunization information,
- Other medical records,
- Teacher and counselor evaluations,
- Reports of behavioral patterns, and
- State assessment instruments that have been administered to your child.

[See **Student Records** on page 6.]

Granting Permission to Video or Audio Record a Student

As a parent, you may grant or deny any written request from the district to make a video or voice recording of your child. State law, however, permits the school to make a video or voice recording without parental permission for the following circumstances:

- When it is to be used for school safety;
- When it relates to classroom instruction or a cocurricular or extracurricular activity;
or
- When it relates to media coverage of the school.

Removing a Student Temporarily from the Classroom

You may remove your child temporarily from the classroom if an instructional activity in which your child is scheduled to participate conflicts with your religious or moral beliefs. The removal cannot be for the purpose of avoiding a test and may not extend for an entire semester. Further, your child must satisfy grade-level and graduation requirements as determined by the school and by the Texas Education Agency.

Excusing a Student from Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags

As a parent, you may request that your child be excused from participation in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. The request must be in writing. State law does not allow your child to be excused from participation in the required minute of silence or silent

activity that follows. [See **Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence** on page 37 and policy EC(LEGAL).]

Excusing a Student from Reciting a Portion of the Declaration of Independence

You may request that your child be excused from recitation of a portion of the Declaration of Independence. State law requires students in social studies classes in grades 3–12 to recite a portion of the text of the Declaration of Independence during Celebrate Freedom Week unless (1) you provide a written statement requesting that your child be excused, (2) the district determines that your child has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or (3) you are a representative of a foreign government to whom the United States government extends diplomatic immunity. [See policy EHBK(LEGAL).]

Requesting Notices of Certain Student Misconduct

A non-custodial parent may request in writing that he or she be provided, for the remainder of the school year, a copy of any written notice usually provided to a parent related to your child’s misconduct that may involve placement in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) or expulsion. [See policy FO(LEGAL) and the *Student Code of Conduct*.]

Requesting Transfers for Your Child

As a parent, you have a right:

- To request the transfer of your child to another classroom or campus if your child has been determined by the board or its designee to have been a victim of bullying as the term is defined by Education Code 25.0341. Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. See the superintendent for information. [See policy FDB.]
- To request the transfer of your child to attend a safe public school in the district if your child attends school at a campus identified by TEA as persistently dangerous or if your child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds. [See policy FDD(LOCAL).]
- To request the transfer of your child to a neighboring district if your child has been the victim of a sexual assault by another student assigned to the same campus, whether that assault occurred on or off campus, and that student has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for that assault. [See policies FDD(LEGAL) and (LOCAL).]

Requesting Classroom Assignment for Multiple Birth Siblings

As a parent, if your children are multiple birth siblings (e.g., twins, triplets, etc.) assigned to the same grade and campus, you may request that they be placed either in the same classroom or in separate classrooms. Your written request must be submitted no later than the 14th day after the enrollment of your children. [See FDB(LEGAL).]

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Parents of Students with Disabilities

Parents of students with learning difficulties or who may need special education services may request an evaluation for special education at any time. For more information, see **Special Programs** on page 47 and contact Deborah Wilkinson at 940-846-3531.

Options and Requirements for Providing Assistance to Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need or May Need Special Education

If a child is experiencing learning difficulties, the parent may contact the person listed below to learn about the district's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including referral for a special education evaluation. Students having difficulty in the regular classroom should be considered for tutorial, compensatory, and other support services that are available to all students.

At any time, a parent is entitled to request an evaluation for special education services. Within a reasonable amount of time, the district must decide if the evaluation is needed. If evaluation is needed, the parent will be notified and asked to provide consent for the evaluation. The district must complete the evaluation and the report within 60 calendar days of the date the district receives the written consent. The district must give a copy of the report to the parent.

If the district determines that the evaluation is not needed, the district will provide the parent with a written notice that explains why the child will not be evaluated. This written notice will include a statement that informs the parent of his or her rights if the parent disagrees with the district. Additionally, the notice must inform the parent how to obtain a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards—Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities*.

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education is Cathryn Creel at 940-846-3531.

If a student is receiving special education services at a campus outside his or her attendance zone, the parent or guardian may request that any other student residing in the household be transferred to the same campus, if the appropriate grade level for the transferring student is offered on that campus. [See policy FDB(LOCAL).]

Services for Title I Participants

The Parent Involvement Coordinator, who works with parents of students participating in Title I programs is Pam Hall and may be contacted at 940-846-3531.

Student Records

Both federal and state laws safeguard student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents and eligible students certain rights. For purposes of student records,

an “eligible” student is one who is 18 or older OR who is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

Virtually all information pertaining to student performance, including grades, test results, and disciplinary records, is considered confidential educational records. Release is restricted to:

- The parents—whether married, separated, or divorced—unless the school is given a copy of a court order terminating parental rights. Federal law requires that, as soon as a student becomes 18 or is emancipated by a court, control of the records go to the student. The parents may continue to have access to the records, however, if the student is a dependent for tax purposes.
- District staff members who have what federal law refers to as a “legitimate educational interest” in a student’s records. “Legitimate educational interest” in a student’s records includes working with the student; considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student’s case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities; compiling statistical data; or investigating or evaluating programs. Such persons would include school officials (such as board members, the superintendent, and principals), school staff members (such as teachers, counselors, and diagnosticians), or an agent of the district (such as a medical consultant).
- Various governmental agencies.
- Individuals granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.
- A school or institution of postsecondary education to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which he or she subsequently enrolls.

Release to any other person or agency—such as a prospective employer or for a scholarship application—will occur only with parental or student permission as appropriate.

The principal is custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The principal is the custodian of all records for students who have withdrawn or graduated.

Records may be inspected by a parent or eligible student during regular school hours. If circumstances prevent inspection during these hours, the district will either provide a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review these records. The records custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records. The address of the Superintendent’s office is 505 Washington Street, Newcastle, Texas 76372.

The address of the principals’ office is:

505 Washington Street, Newcastle, Texas 76372

A parent (or eligible student) may inspect the student’s records and request a correction if the records are considered inaccurate or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights. A request to correct a student’s record should be submitted to the principal. The request must clearly identify the part of the record that should be corrected and include an explanation of how the information in the record is inaccurate. If the district denies the

request to amend the records, the parent or eligible student has the right to request a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the parent or eligible student has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student's record. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, contesting a student's grade in a course is handled through the general complaint process found in policy FNG(LOCAL). [See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 42 and **Student or Parent Complaints and Concerns** on page 16 for an overview of the process.]

Copies of student records are available at a cost of ten cents per page, payable in advance. If the student qualifies for free or reduced-price lunches and the parents are unable to view the records during regular school hours, one copy of the record will be provided at no charge upon written request of the parent.

The district's policy regarding student records found at FL(LOCAL) is available from the principal's or superintendent's office.

Directory Information

The law permits the district to designate certain personal information about students as "directory information." This "directory information" will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it.

However, release of a student's directory information may be prevented by the parent or an eligible student. This objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days of your child's first day of instruction for this school year. [See the "Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information" included in this handbook.

Directory Information for School-Sponsored Purposes

The district often needs to use student information for the following school-sponsored purposes: student directory, student yearbook, or district publication.

For these specific school-sponsored purposes, the district would like to use your child's

- A student's name, address, telephone number, and date and place of birth.
- The student's photograph, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, and weight and height of members of athletic teams.
- The student's dates of attendance, grade level, enrollment status, honors and awards received in school, and most recent school previously attended.

This information will not be released to the public without the consent of the parent or eligible student.

Unless you object to the use of your child's information for these limited purposes, the school will not need to ask your permission each time the district wishes to use this information for the school-sponsored purposes listed.

Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education

The district is required by federal law to comply with a request by a military recruiter or an institution of higher education for students' names, addresses, and telephone listings, unless parents have advised the district not to release their child's information without prior written consent. A form has been attached for you to complete if you do not want the district to provide this information to military recruiters or institutions of higher education.

Bacterial Meningitis

State law specifically requires the district to provide the following information:

- What is meningitis?

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral meningitis is most common and the least serious. Bacterial meningitis is the most common form of serious bacterial infection with the potential for serious, long-term complications. It is an uncommon disease, but requires urgent treatment with antibiotics to prevent permanent damage or death.

- What are the symptoms?

Someone with meningitis will become very ill. The illness may develop over one or two days, but it can also rapidly progress in a matter of hours. Not everyone with meningitis will have the same symptoms.

Children (over 1 year old) and adults with meningitis may have a severe headache, high temperature, vomiting, sensitivity to bright lights, neck stiffness or joint pains, and drowsiness or confusion. In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots. These can occur anywhere on the body.

The diagnosis of bacterial meningitis is based on a combination of symptoms and laboratory results.

- How serious is bacterial meningitis?

If it is diagnosed early and treated promptly, the majority of people make a complete recovery. In some cases it can be fatal or a person may be left with a permanent disability.

- How is bacterial meningitis spread?

Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. The germs live naturally in the back of our noses and throats, but they do not live for long outside the body. They are spread when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing, sharing drinking containers, utensils, or cigarettes).

The germ does not cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the germ for days, weeks, or even months. The bacteria rarely overcome the body's immune system and cause meningitis or another serious illness.

- How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?

Do not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss.

While there are vaccines for some other strains of bacterial meningitis, they are used only in special circumstances. These include when there is a disease outbreak in a community or for people traveling to a country where there is a high risk of getting the disease. Also, a vaccine is recommended by some groups for college students, particularly freshmen living in dorms or residence halls. The vaccine is safe and effective (85–90 percent). It can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within seven to ten days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to five years.

- What should you do if you think you or a friend might have bacterial meningitis?

You should seek prompt medical attention.

- Where can you get more information?

Your school nurse, family doctor, and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. You may also call your local health department or Regional Department of State Health Services office to ask about a meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the Web sites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov>, and the Department of State Health Services, <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/>.

SECTION II: INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Topics in this section of the handbook contain important information on academics, school activities, and school operations and requirements. Take a moment with your child to become familiar with the various issues addressed in this section. It is conveniently organized in alphabetical order to serve as a quick-reference when you or your child have a question about a specific school-related issue. Should you be unable to find the information on a particular topic, please contact Cathryn Creel at 940-846-3531.

ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE

Regular school attendance is essential for a student to make the most of his or her education—to benefit from teacher-led and school activities, to build each day’s learning on the previous day’s, and to grow as an individual. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student’s mastery of the instructional materials; therefore, the student and parent should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. Two state laws, one dealing with compulsory attendance, the other with attendance for course credit, are of special interest to students and parents. They are discussed below:

Compulsory Attendance

State law requires that a student between the ages of six and 18 attend school, as well as any applicable accelerated instruction program, extended year program, or tutorial session, unless the student is otherwise excused from attendance or legally exempt.

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her 18th birthday is required to attend each school day until the end of the school year and is subject to compulsory attendance laws, if the student is under 21 years old. In addition, if a student 18 or older has more than five unexcused absences in a semester the district may revoke the student’s enrollment. The student’s presence on school property thereafter would be unauthorized and may be considered trespassing. [See FEA]

State law requires attendance in an accelerated reading instruction program when kindergarten, first grade, or second grade students are assigned to such a program. Parents will be notified in writing if their child is assigned to an accelerated reading instruction program as a result of the reading diagnosis test.

School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent without permission from school; from any class; from required special programs, such as additional special instruction (termed “accelerated instruction” by the state) assigned by the grade placement committee and basic skills for ninth graders; or from required tutorials and ZAP will be considered in violation of the compulsory attendance law and subject to disciplinary action.

A court of law may also impose penalties against both the student and his or her parents if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. A complaint against the parent may be filed in court if the student:

- Is absent from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, or
- Is absent on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period.

Attendance for Credit

To receive credit in a class, a student must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who attends at least 75 percent but fewer than 90 percent of the days the class is offered may receive credit for the class if he or she completes a plan, approved by the principal that allows the student to fulfill the instructional requirements for the class. If a student is involved in a criminal or juvenile court proceeding, the approval of the judge presiding over the case will also be required before the student receives credit for the class.

If a student attends less than 75 percent of the days a class is offered or has not completed the plan approved by the principal, then the student will be referred to the attendance review committee to determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the student can regain credit, if appropriate. [See policies at FEC]

In determining whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences, the attendance committee will use the following guidelines:

- All absences will be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. If makeup work is completed, absences for religious holy days and documented health-care appointments will be considered days of attendance for this purpose. [See policies at FEB.]
- A transfer or migrant student begins to accumulate absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district. For a student transferring into the district after school begins, including a migrant student, only those absences after enrollment will be considered.
- In reaching a decision about a student's absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that it is in the best interest of the student.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or the student's parent could exercise any control.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit.

The student or parent may appeal the committee's decision to the board of trustees by filing a written request with the superintendent in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL).

The actual number of days a student must be in attendance in order to receive credit will depend on whether the class is for a full semester or for a full year.

Parent’s Note After An Absence

When a student must be absent from school, the student—upon returning to school—must bring a note, signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. A note signed by the student, even with the parent’s permission, will not be accepted unless the student is 18 or older. **Written excuse notes will not be accepted more than five days after student’s return to school.**

Doctor’s Note After An Absence for Illness

Upon return to school, a student absent for more than **five** days because of a personal illness must bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student’s extended absence from school. [See FEC(LOCAL).]

Driver License Attendance Verification

To obtain a driver license, a student between the ages of 16 and 18 must provide to the Texas Department of Public Safety a form obtained from the school verifying that the student has met the 90 percent attendance requirement for the semester preceding the date of application. The student can obtain this form at the campus office.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The school principal provides students and parents information regarding academic programs to prepare for higher education and career choices. [For more information, see page 30 of this handbook and policies at EIF.]

[See **Academic Counseling** on page 18.]

AWARDS AND HONORS

Newcastle students that have perfect attendance, in each class, for the school year (no excused or unexcused absences and no more than three tardies) earn a “Perfect Attendance” award and students with all “E’s” in conduct in every class for all four of the Nine-Weeks grading periods earn a “Citizenship” award. Students with all “A” averages for the year will earn the “A’ Honor Roll” award. Students with all “A” and “B” averages for the year will earn the “A’ and ‘B’ Honor Roll” award. These awards and individual teacher recognition awards are presented during an awards ceremony or banquet in May.

BULLYING

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students directs written or verbal expressions or physical conduct against another student and the behavior results in harm to the student or the student’s property, places a student in fear of harm to himself or his property, or is so severe that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment.

The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit bullying and to respond to reports of bullying. [See FFI(LOCAL).]

CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS

The district offers career and technology programs in business and vocational shop. Admission to these programs is based on aptitude testing, scheduling and instructor recommendation. Newcastle ISD will take steps to ensure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational and vocational programs.

CLASS RANK / TOP TEN PERCENT / HIGHEST RANKING STUDENT

Valedictorian honors will be given to the student making the highest weighted, scholastic average during the four years of high school study at Newcastle. Salutatorian honors will be awarded to the student making the second highest weighted four-year scholastic average at Newcastle High School. These honors are determined after the 3rd Nine-Weeks grading period of the senior year.

Only grades from state approved core-curriculum and foreign language courses will be used in determining averages. The school administrator will determine appropriate course work for all students. Alternate courses such as college courses, correspondence courses, and NovaNET will be approved on an individual basis. Grades from these alternate course choices (rather than classes at Newcastle High School) will not be used in averaging grades for Valedictorian and Salutatorian.

In calculating the averages for Valedictorian and Salutatorian, the course weight system defined in the section on **grading policies** will be used, **although the College Board intends to mandate a unified grade weighting system in the fall of 2008.**

To be named Valedictorian or Salutatorian, a student must have enrolled in the Newcastle High School for all of high school courses, except for concurrent college credit and/or credit by exam. High School coursework must be completed within four years.

All transfer grades in English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Foreign Language shall be accepted for class rankings: however, Pre-AP weight shall be awarded to grades transferred for Pre-AP courses only when the same Pre-AP course is offered in the District. Transferred letter grades shall be converted to numerical grades and then to grade points before averages are computed for class rankings.

For two school years following their graduation, district graduates who ranked in the top ten percent of their graduating class are eligible for admission into four-year public universities and colleges in Texas. Students and parents should contact the counselor or principal for further information about how to apply and the deadline for application.

[For further information, see policies at EIC.]

Grade Point Average (Note: the College Board intends to mandate a unified grade weighting system in the fall of 2008.)

The Grade Point Average (GPA) is used to determine academic standing and is computed by dividing total grade points earned by the total number of semester grades. Only high school courses will be calculated towards GPA. Students may not audit courses for the sole purpose of increasing their GPA.

Grade Point shall be weighted as follows:

1.4= Baccalaureate and A/P courses

1.3= Pre A/P and Honors courses

1.2= Algebra II, Physics, Spanish/other languages, Computer Math, Advanced Math, concurrent credit English IV, Statistics, PreCalculus, Calculus, and any other courses required for Recommended or Distinguished graduation plans.

1.1 = Algebra I, Chemistry, Integrated Physics and Chemistry (IPC), History, Government, Economics, English I-IV, Geometry, Biology and any other core curriculum class that has not been modified.

1.0 = Any modified or slower-paced courses, API modules, NovaNET, or internet courses.

When sending transcripts that require a 4-point system, the preceding weight system will be used to recalculate grades and establish class ranking. In using the 4-point system, a 96 would equal a 3.6, and 88 would be 2.8, and a 74 would be 1.4, etc.

[For further information, see policies at EIC.]

Junior High Honor Graduates Policy

The honor of Junior High Valedictorian or Salutatorian will be awarded to the students with the highest and second highest core-curriculum (Math, Science, Language Arts, Social Studies, and Foreign Language) averages for Seventh and Eighth Grade courses. The Newcastle Junior High honor graduates must have attended Newcastle Junior High for all of Eighth Grade.

CLASS SCHEDULES

Students in grades 9-12 may request a change of class schedule before September 22, 2008 for the first semester and before January 26, 2009 for the second semester. Forms are available in the office. All schedule changes must be pre-approved by the principal.

COLLEGE CREDIT COURSES

Before enrolling in dual credit or concurrent enrollment college courses, students must complete a dual credit or concurrent enrollment form for approval by the principal. All students seeking college credit are responsible for THEA college entrance testing accountability, tuition and college books. See the counselor or principal for information.

COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

Usually student or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed by a phone call or a conference with the teacher or principal. For those complaints and concerns that cannot be handled so easily, the district has adopted a standard complaint policy at FNG (LOCAL) in the district's policy manual. A copy of this policy may be obtained in the principal's or superintendent's office or on the district's Web site.

In general, the student or parent should submit a written complaint and request a conference with the campus principal. If the concern is not resolved, a request for a conference should be sent to the superintendent. If still unresolved, the district provides for the complaint to be presented to the board of trustees.

COMPUTER RESOURCES

To prepare students for an increasingly technological society, the district has made an investment in computer technology for instructional purposes. Use of these computer resources is restricted to students working under a teacher's supervision and for approved purposes only. Students and parents will be asked to sign a user agreement (separate from this handbook) regarding use of these resources; violations of this agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

Students and their parents should be aware that e-mail using district computers is restricted and allowed only by written teacher authorization. Student email is not private and may be monitored by district staff. [For additional information, see policies at CQ.]

CONDUCT

Applicability of School Rules

As required by law, the board has adopted a *Student Code of Conduct* that prohibits certain behaviors and defines standards of acceptable behavior—both on and off campus—and consequences for violation of these standards. The district has disciplinary authority over a student in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*. Students and parents should be familiar with the standards set out in the *Student Code of Conduct*, as well as campus and classroom rules.

To achieve the best possible learning environment for all students, the *Student Code of Conduct* and other campus rules will apply whenever the interest of the district is involved, whether on or off school grounds, in conjunction with classes and school-sponsored activities.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment—spanking or paddling the student—may be used as a discipline management technique in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct* and policy FO (LOCAL) in the district’s policy manual.

Disruptions

As identified by law, disruptions include the following:

- Interference with the movement of people at an exit, entrance, or hallway of a district building without authorization from an administrator.
- Interference with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly.
- Use of force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.
- Interference with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to district property.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving district property without authorization from an administrator.
- Disruption of classes or other school activities while on district property or on public property that is within 500 feet of district property. Class disruption includes making loud noises; trying to entice a student away from, or to prevent a student from attending, a required class or activity; and entering a classroom without authorization and disrupting the activity with loud or profane language or any misconduct.
- Interference with the transportation of students in district vehicles.

Administrator Assigned Detention

Morning detention assigned by the principal will be from 7:00AM – 8:00AM in the school library. Administrator assigned lunch detention will be for the entire lunch period.

Teacher Lunch Detention

NISD has extended the high school lunch from 30 minutes to 47 minutes, for the 2008-2009 school year. Detention assigned by the teacher will be the first 20 minutes of the high school lunch period in the teacher’s classroom. Students who fail to attend the assigned lunch detention will have a closed campus for 10 school days. Students who are tardy or absent after lunch for the third time will be restricted to campus for 10 days. Every tardy or absence thereafter will result in another 10 days of closed campus. Students who fail to comply with the closed campus will be given 3 days ISS in addition to completing the 10 days of closed campus for lunch.

Radios, CD Players, Other Electronic Devices and Games, and Cell Phones

Students are not permitted to possess such items as knives, pagers, cell phones, radios, CD players, tape recorders, camcorders, DVD players, cameras, electronic devices or games, or telecommunications devices with text messaging at school, unless prior permission has been obtained from the principal. Without such permission, teachers will collect the items and turn them in to the principal's office. After the first offense, parents will be contacted to pick up the items. After the third offense, parents may pick up the items on May 29, 2009.

Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. For certain items, such as pagers or cell phones, in which a third party retains a legal right of ownership, the school may charge for releasing it to the third party.

[See policy FNCE.]

Social Events

School rules apply to all school social events. Guests attending these events are expected to observe the same rules as students, and a student inviting a guest will share responsibility for the conduct of his or her guest.

A student attending a social event will be asked to sign out when leaving before the end of the event; anyone leaving before the official end of the event will not be readmitted.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES / CONDITIONS

To protect other students from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school while contagious. If a parent suspects that his or her child has a contagious disease, the parent should contact the school nurse or principal so that other students who might have been exposed to the disease can be alerted.

The school nurse or the principal's office can provide information from the Department of State Health Services regarding these diseases.

CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

The district permits high school students to take correspondence courses—by mail or via the Internet—for credit toward high school graduation.

[For further information, see policies at EEJC.]

COUNSELING

Academic Counseling

Students and their parents are encouraged to talk with a school counselor, teacher, or principal to learn more about course offerings, graduation requirements, and early graduation procedures.

To plan for the future, each student should work closely with the counselor in order to enroll in the high school courses that best prepare him or her for attendance at a college,

university, or training school, or for pursuit of some other type of advanced education. The counselor can also provide information about entrance exams and application deadlines, as well as information about automatic admission to state colleges and universities, financial aid, housing, and scholarships.

Personal Counseling

The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, or emotional issues, or substance abuse. The counselor may also make available information about community resources to address these concerns. A student who wishes to meet with the counselor should notify a teacher, school administrator, or Teresa Koonsman. Sherri Blassingame, Gayle Bailey and Teresa Koonsman are trained and available to assist students with the “Why Try” model of decision-making.

Psychological Exams, Tests, or Treatment

The school will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without first obtaining the parent’s written consent. Parental consent is not necessary when a psychological examination, test, or treatment is required by state or federal law for special education purposes or by the Texas Education Agency for child abuse investigations and reports.

[For more information, refer to FFE(LEGAL) and FFG(EXHIBIT).]

CREDIT BY EXAM—If a Student Has Taken the Course

A student who has previously taken a course or subject—but did not receive credit for it—may, in circumstances determined by the teacher, counselor, principal, or attendance committee, be permitted to earn credit by passing an exam on the essential knowledge and skills defined for that course or subject. Prior instruction may include, for example, incomplete coursework due to a failed course or excessive absences, home schooling, correspondence courses, or independent study supervised by a teacher.

The counselor or principal would determine if the student could take an exam for this purpose. If approval is granted, the student must score at least 70 on the exam to receive credit for the course or subject.

The attendance review committee may also offer a student with excessive absences an opportunity to earn credit for a course by passing an exam.

A student may not use this exam, however, to regain eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities.

[For further information, see the counselor and policies EEJA.]

CREDIT BY EXAM—If a Student Has Not Taken the Course

A student will be permitted to take an exam to earn credit for an academic course for which the student has had no prior instruction. The dates on which exams are scheduled during the 2007–2008 school year include:

Dates Scheduled:

<u>TEST DATE</u>	<u>APPLICATION DEADLINE</u>
March 1, 2008	January 15, 2008
June 14, 2008	April 29, 2008
June 21, 2008	May 10, 2008
July 11, 2008	May 25, 2008
July 12, 2008	May 25, 2008
October 18, 2008	September 5, 2008
February 28, 2009	January 16, 2009
June 6, 2009	April 17, 2009
June 13, 2009	April 24, 2009
July 10, 2009	May 29, 2009
July 11, 2009	May 29, 2009

A student will earn credit with a passing score of at least 90 on the exam.

If a student plans to take an exam, the student (or parent) must register with the principal no later than 30 days prior to the scheduled testing date. The district will not honor a request by a parent to administer a test on a date other than the published dates. If the district agrees to administer a test other than the one chosen by the district, the parent must purchase a test from a university approved by the State Board of Education. [For further information, see EEJB(LOCAL).]

DATING VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION

The district believes that all students learn best in an environment free from dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation and that their welfare is best served when they are free from this prohibited conduct while attending school. Students are expected to treat other students and district employees with courtesy and respect; to avoid behaviors known to be offensive; and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop. District employees are expected to treat students with courtesy and respect.

The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly respond to inappropriate and offensive behaviors that are based on a person's race, color, religion, , gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. [See policy FFH]

Dating Violence

Dating violence occurs when a person in a current or past dating relationship uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other person in the relationship. This type of conduct is considered harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance.

Examples of dating violence against a student may include, but are not limited to, physical or sexual assaults, name-calling, put-downs, threats to hurt the student or the student's family members or members of the student's household, destroying property belonging to the student, threats to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship, attempts to isolate the student from friends and family, stalking, or encouraging others to engage in these behaviors.

Discrimination

Discrimination is defined as any conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law, that it negatively affects the student.

Harassment

Harassment, in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance. A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office and in the superintendent's office or on the district's website.

Examples of harassment may include, but are not limited to, offensive or derogatory language directed at a person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee or volunteer does not include necessary or permissible physical contact not reasonably construed as sexual in nature. However, romantic and other inappropriate social relationships, as well as all sexual relationships, between students and district employees are prohibited, even if consensual.

Examples of prohibited sexual harassment may include, but not be limited to, touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; sexual advances; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

Retaliation

Retaliation of a student occurs when a student receives threats from another student or an employee or when an employee imposes an unjustified punishment or unwarranted grade reduction. Retaliation does not include petty slights and annoyances from other students or negative comments from a teacher that are justified by a student's poor academic performance in the classroom.

Retaliation against a person, who makes a good faith report of discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, is prohibited. A person who makes a false claim

or offers false statements or refuses to cooperate with a district investigation, however, may be subject to appropriate discipline. Retaliation against a person who is participating in an investigation of alleged discrimination or harassment is also prohibited.

Reporting Procedures

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced dating violence, discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should immediately report the problem to a teacher, counselor, principal, or other district employee. The report may be made by the student's parent. See policy FFH(LOCAL) for the appropriate districts officials to whom to make a report.

Investigation of Report

To the extent possible, the district will respect the privacy of the student; however, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and to comply with law. Allegations of prohibited conduct, which includes dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, will be promptly investigated. The district will notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct by an adult associated with the district.

In the event prohibited conduct involves another student, the district will notify the parents of the student alleged to have experienced the prohibited conduct when the allegations, if proven, would constitute a violation as defined by policy.

If the district's investigation indicates that prohibited conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary or corrective action will be taken to address the conduct. The district may take disciplinary action even if the conduct that is the subject of the complaint was not unlawful.

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL).

DISCRIMINATION

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on pages 20-21.]

DISTANCE LEARNING

Credit toward state graduation requirements may be granted for distance learning courses only as follows:

1. Students may earn credit through distance learning technologies, such as, but not limited to, satellite, Internet, two-way videoconferencing, and instructional television.
2. The distance learning courses must include the state-required TEKS for such a course.
3. Newcastle High School currently offers selected classes through NovaNET Internet courses to a limited number of qualifying students. NovaNET courses are not included in the computation of grade point average.
4. Junior and Senior students may qualify for concurrent enrollment and, or concurrent credit distance learning or Internet classes with Ranger College, or

with other colleges. Students must meet the requirements of the THEA college entrance exam. All fees, tuition, books, and expenses are payable by the student; however, Newcastle ISD contributes to a portion of some tuition and books. For more information contact Cathryn Creel at least 45 days before enrollment for information.

DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLISHED MATERIALS OR DOCUMENTS

School Materials

Publications prepared by and for the school may be posted or distributed, with the prior approval of the principal, sponsor, or teacher. Such items may include school posters, brochures, flyers, etc.

The school newspaper, *Bobcat Tracks*, and the yearbook, *The Whirlwind*, are available to students.

All school publications are under the supervision of a teacher, sponsor, and the principal.

[See **Directory Information for School-Sponsored Purposes** on page 8.]

Non-school Materials...from students

Students must obtain prior approval from the principal before posting, circulating, or distributing written materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, petitions, films, tapes, posters, or other visual or auditory materials that were not developed under the oversight of the school. To be considered, any non-school material must include the name of the sponsoring person or organization. The decision regarding approval will be made in two school days.

The principal has designated the principal's office as the location for approved non-school materials to be placed for voluntary viewing by students. [See policies at FNAA.]

A student may appeal the principal's decision in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL). Any student who posts nonschool material without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*. Materials displayed without the principal's approval will be removed.

Non-school Materials...from others

Written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials not sponsored by the district or by a district-affiliated school-support organization will not be sold, circulated, distributed, or posted on any district premises by any district employee or by persons or groups not associated with the district, except as permitted by policies at GKDA. To be considered for distribution, any nonschool material must meet the limitations on content established in the policy, include the name of the sponsoring person or organization, and be submitted to the Superintendent for prior review. The Superintendent will approve or reject the materials within two school days of the time the materials are received. The requestor may appeal

a rejection in accordance with the appropriate district complaint policy. [See policies at DGBA, FNG, or GF.]

Prior review will not be required for:

- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a school-sponsored meeting intended for adults and held after school hours.
- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a community group meeting held after school hours in accordance with policy GKD(LOCAL) or a non-curriculum-related student group meeting held in accordance with FNAB(LOCAL).
- Distribution for electioneering purposes during the time a school facility is being used as a polling place, in accordance with state law.

All non-school materials distributed under these circumstances must be removed from district property immediately following the event at which the materials are distributed.

DRESS AND GROOMING

The district's dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevents disruption, and minimize safety hazards. Students and parents may determine a student's personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with the following:

The Newcastle Independent School District recognizes that parents should accept responsibility for developing appropriate standards of dress and grooming for their children. School personnel, however, share this responsibility because a student's behavior and achievement may be influenced by dress and grooming habits.

It is acknowledged also that schools have a responsibility for developing dress and grooming habits that will contribute to a student's success when he/she leaves school. Students' dress and grooming will be considered acceptable if it does not violate any of the following principles:

1. Clothing worn is not to be suggestive or indecent.
2. Clothing and general appearance is not to be the type that would interfere with the instructional program.
3. Clothing and general appearance is to be such as not to constitute a health or safety hazard.

The following rules and regulations shall be enforced:

1. A student must wear shoes and shoestrings must be tied.
2. Students may not wear clothing that is torn or that has holes between the shoulders and mid thigh.
3. Shorts must meet acceptable standards as established by the school administration.

Example: Boys

Acceptable: long, loose walking shorts, may not be shorter than mid thigh.

Unacceptable: tight, short tennis wear or PE type shorts, spandex worn as an outer garment.

Example: Girls

Acceptable: Walking shorts may not be any shorter than mid thigh.

Unacceptable: “Short” shorts or PE type shorts, short walking shorts that are not near the knee or spandex worn as an outer garment.

4. Board policy FNCA (LOCAL) prohibits pictures, emblems, or writings on clothing that:
 - A. Are lewd, offensive, vulgar, or obscene.
 - B. Advertise or depict tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs, or any other substance prohibited under FNCF (LEGAL).
5. Mini-skirts are prohibited.
6. Boys’ hair must be no longer than shoulder length (top of the shoulder) and must be kept neat and clean. Any exceptions to this policy must have prior approval by the Newcastle ISD administration. The hair may not fall over the eyes, so as to cause a health or safety hazard. This length will be measured by combing the hair straight down over the forehead.
7. Boys shall be clean-shaven and sideburns shall not extend below the bottom of the earlobe.
8. Boys and girls may not wear hats or caps in the building unless it is part of a special event or activity approved by the school administration.

Prohibited Articles

- Body suits backless tops or dresses mini-skirts
- Halter tops spaghetti strap tops and dresses tube tops
- Tank tops transparent or see-through clothing headbands
- Bandannas caps/hats
- Sunglasses baggy or saggy pants
- Sleeveless shirts on boys
- Shirts with midriff showing – No visible skin while standing or seated.
- Torn clothing or clothing with holes between the shoulders and knees.
- Clothing advertising or depicting tobacco or alcoholic products, drugs, or any other substance prohibited under board policy FNCF (LOCAL)
- Clothing with coloring, designs, symbols, or lettering that would be interpreted as inappropriate, suggestive, or vulgar

- Visible tattoos (must be completely covered up)
- Jewelry that is noisy, promotes undue attraction, or dangerous
- Jewelry worn in body piercing other than ears on females.

The District prohibits any clothing or grooming that may reasonably be expected to cause disruption of or interference with normal school operations. Clothing shall be properly fitted and properly worn. Administrators are authorized to make the final decision. Teachers are authorized to confiscate earrings worn by males and/or females and all hats/caps on sight worn in school building. For the first offense hats/caps will be removed and kept in the administrative offices until the end of the school day. For subsequent offenses the hat/cap will be kept in the administrative office until the end of the school year. Students in violation of Newcastle ISD dress code will be placed in In-School-Suspension until their clothing is appropriate. Most dress code violations will be handled in the principal's office by exchanging the offending clothing for district-supplied clothing, which may be exchanged back after the end of the school day. Three or more dress code violations in one semester will be considered persistent, recurring violations and the student will be assigned to one hour after-school detention with the principal that same day. **STUDENTS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE CAMPUS TO CORRECT DRESS CODE VIOLATIONS.**

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

Participation in school-related activities is an excellent way for a student to develop talents, receive individual recognition, and build strong friendships with other students; participation, however, is a privilege, not a right.

Eligibility for participation in many of these activities is governed by state law and the rules of the University Interscholastic League (UIL)—a statewide association overseeing interdistrict competition. The following requirements apply to all extracurricular activities:

- A student who receives at the end of a grading period a grade below 70 in any academic class—other than a class identified as honors or advanced by either the State Board of Education or by the local board of trustees—may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.
- A student with disabilities who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.
- An ineligible student may practice or rehearse.
- A student is allowed in a school year up to twelve absences not related to post-district competition, a maximum of five absences for post-district competition prior to state, and a maximum of two absences for state competition. All extracurricular activities and public performances, whether UIL activities or other activities approved by the board, are subject to these restrictions.
- An absence for participation in an activity that has not been approved will receive an unexcused absence.

Please note: Sponsors of student clubs and performing groups such as the band, choir, and drill and athletic teams may establish standards of behavior—including consequences for misbehavior—that are stricter than those for students in general. If a violation is also a violation of school rules, the consequences specified by the *Student Code of Conduct* or by local policy will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization’s standards of behavior.

[For further information, see policies at FM and FO.]

Athletic Code

One area in which students can enrich their educational experience is interscholastic athletics. Competitive athletics can sharpen the intellect, improve concentration, and help assure that a healthy body is going to do better mental work.

The following player code has been established in order to help teach and impress the importance of good sportsmanship, respect for rules and authority, development of leadership, team pride, team work, team discipline, as well as to eliminate disruptive behavior in the locker rooms, at practice, in games, and on trips.

1. Abide by the policies established for the students of the Newcastle Independent School District.
2. Fulfill the eligibility requirements established by the University Interscholastic League.
3. Continue through with a sport once it is started.
4. Strive to have a proper diet and enough sleep.
5. Abstain from the smoking of tobacco, the use of alcoholic beverages, abusive drugs, and abusive language.
6. Be responsible for the school equipment that you are issued. The athlete will be held accountable for any damaged or lost equipment that he is issued. Unless prior permission has been obtained, the athlete will wear only the equipment issued by the coach for game participation.
7. Take care of personal belongings and leave the belongings of others alone. Stealing will not be tolerated. It is the responsibility of the athlete to keep his/her dressing room locker locked.
8. Be on time at practices or games, conference with the coach about missing a practice or a game before it is missed. The athlete will be expected to make up the conditioning missed if absent. If the athlete is late to practice or to a game, he will be expected to carry out extra conditioning at the close of practice, or in the case of being tardy to the game, at the close of the next practice.
9. Accept the decisions of the game officials.
10. Accept the decisions of the coach.
11. Be a good representative of the team, school, and community. At all times, “remember who you are and where you are from.”

Violations of this code will result in a conference between the athlete and the coach. The penalties may be extra conditioning, suspensions, or dismissal from the program.

[For further information, see policies FM and FO.]

Offices and Elections

Class sponsors are certified teachers assigned by the principal to sponsor a specific class. Following the principal's submitting of the sponsor list to the superintendent, the School board will give final approval of sponsors. Generally, the assignment is made at the beginning of the Seventh Grade and the sponsors continue with the class through high school graduation.

Class favorites will be nominated by each class and voted on by popular vote during the latter part of October.

Each year, each class in grades 9-12 elects two Student Council representatives from the eligible nominees. Eligible nominees must meet the following criteria: 1. Must have been a student at Newcastle ISD for all of the previous school year. 2. Must not have been in ISS or DAEP in the last twelve months. 3. Must have an 85 or better average in each core curriculum class for the previous school year.

FEES

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state and local funds at no charge to a student. A student, however, is expected to provide his or her own pencils, paper, erasers, and notebooks and may be required to pay certain other fees or deposits, including:

- Costs for materials for a class project that the student will keep.
- Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations and admission fees to extracurricular activities.
- Security deposits.
- Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
- Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, class rings, yearbooks, graduation announcements, etc.
- Voluntarily purchased student accident insurance.
- Personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that becomes the property of the student.
- Fees for lost, damaged calculators or technology.
- Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books.
- Fee to recover personnel electronic devices.
- Fees for driver training courses, if offered.

- Fees for optional courses offered for credit that requires use of facilities not available on district premises.
- Summer school for courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year.
- A reasonable fee for providing transportation to a student who lives within two miles of the school. [See **Buses and Other School Vehicles** on page 46.]
- A fee not to exceed \$50 for costs of providing an educational program outside of regular school hours for a student who has lost credit because of absences and whose parent chooses the program in order for the student to meet the 90 percent attendance requirement. The fee will be charged only if the parent or guardian signs a district-provided request form.

Any required fee or deposit may be waived if the student and parent are unable to pay. Application for such a waiver may be made to the Superintendent. [For further information, see policies at FP.]

FUND-RAISING

Student groups or classes and/or parent groups may be permitted to conduct fund-raising drives for approved school purposes. An application for permission must be made to the principal at least 10 days before the event. [For further information, see policies at FJ and GE.]

GRADE CLASSIFICATION

After the ninth grade, students are classified on the first day of instruction according to the number of credits earned toward graduation.

Credits Earned	Classification
6	Grade 10 (sophomore)
12	Grade 11 (Junior)
18	Grade 12 (Senior)

GRADING GUIDELINES

In grades Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten, achievement is reported to parents as mastery of a list of skills. In grades 1 through 12, achievement is reported to parents as a numerical grade. See EIA(LOCAL).

Semester Examination Exemption

Qualifying students in grades 9-12 may be exempt from semester exams if they meet stringent grade and attendance criteria. Students with no more than two excused absences and a “B” average in a course may be exempt. Students with one or more “unexcused” absences, more than two tardies, or with any conduct grade below an “E” will not be exempt from semester examinations. No student may be exempt from the examination in any course that the student has not passed the Texas Exit Level TAKS examination.

GRADUATION

Requirements for a Diploma

To receive a high school diploma from the district, a student must successfully complete the required number of credits and pass a statewide exit-level exam.

The exit-level test, required for students in grade 11, covers English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies and requires knowledge of Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, Integrated Chemistry and Physics, English III, and early American and United States History, World History, and World Geography. A student who does not pass the exit-level assessment will have additional opportunities to take the test.

Graduation Programs

The district offers the graduation programs listed below. All students entering grade 9 are required to enroll in the Recommended High School Program or Distinguished Achievement (Advanced) Program. Permission to enroll in the Minimum Graduation Program will be granted only if an agreement is reached among the student, the student's parent or person standing in parental relation, and the counselor or appropriate administrator. [See policy EIF(LEGAL).]

Students who entered the ninth grade during the 2005–2006 school year must meet the following credit requirements for graduation:

- Minimum Program 22 credits
- Recommended Program 24 credits
- Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program 24 credits

Students returning to high school who entered the ninth grade during the 2006–2007 school year must meet the following credit requirements for graduation:

- Minimum Program 22 credits
- Recommended Program 24 credits
- Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program 24 credits

Beginning with the 2007–2008 school year, a student entering the ninth grade must meet the following credit requirements for graduation:

- Minimum Program 24 credits
- Recommended Program 26 credits
- Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program 26 credits

Please be aware that not all courses are offered at every secondary campus in the district. A student who wants to take a course not offered at his or her regular campus should contact the counselor about a transfer or other alternatives. If the parents of at least 22 students request a transfer for those students to take a course in the required curriculum other than fine arts or career and technology, the district will offer the course for the following year either by teleconference or at the school from which the transfers were requested.

Texas High School Graduation Requirements for Students Entering 9th Grade Before 2007-8

	<u>Minimum Requirements</u>	<u>Recommended Program</u>	<u>Distinguished Achievement</u>
ENGLISH	4 credits	4 credits	4 credits
MATHEMATICS	3 credits (Must include <i>Algebra I</i> and <i>Geometry</i>)	4 credits (Must include Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry)	4 credits (Must include Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry)
SCIENCE	2 credits (Must include Biology and Integrated Physics and Chemistry)	4 credits (Must include Biology & two of: Integrated Physics and Chemistry, Chemistry, Physics, or Principles of Technology I)	4 credits (Must include Biology & two of: Integrated Physics and Chemistry, Chemistry, Physics, or Principles of Technology I)
SOCIAL STUDIES	2 ½ credits World History or World Geography, US History Studies Since Reconstruction (1 credit each); and US Government (1/2 credit)	3 ½ credits World History, World Geography, US History Studies Since Reconstruction (1 credit each); and US Government (1/2 credit)	3 ½ credits World History, World Geography, US History Studies Since Reconstruction (1 credit each); and US Government (1/2 credit)
ECONOMICS	½ credit	½ credit	½ credit
LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH	None	2 credits in same language	3 credits in same language
HEALTH EDUCATION	½ credits	½ credits	½ credits
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	1 ½ credits	1 ½ credits	1 ½ credits
FINE ARTS	None	1 credit	1 credit
TECHNOLOGY APPLICATIONS	1 credit	1 credit	1 credit
SPEECH	½ credit (must be Communications Applications)	½ credit (must be Communications Applications)	½ credit (must be Communications Applications)
ELECTIVES	1 credit (academic) Must be selected from <i>World History Studies</i> , <i>World Geography Studies</i> , or any science course approved by the SBOE 5 ½ credits (any)	3 ½ credits	2 ½ credits
ADVANCED MEASURES	None	None	Must achieve a combination of four (4) of the advanced measures approved by the SBOE
SUBSTITUTIONS	Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) course equivalents may be substituted.		
CREDITS	22	24	24

Texas High School Graduation Requirements for Students Entering 9th Grade 2007-8

	<u>Minimum Requirements</u>	<u>Recommended Program</u>	<u>Distinguished Achievement</u>
ENGLISH	4 credits	4 credits	4 credits
MATHEMATICS	3credits (Must include <i>Algebra I</i> and <i>Geometry</i> .)	4 credits (Must include <i>Algebra I</i> , <i>Algebra II</i> and <i>Geometry</i> , <i>Math Models</i> must be prior to <i>Algebra II</i> .)	4 credits (Must include Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry. Does not include <i>Math Models</i> .)
SCIENCE	2 credits (Must include <i>Biology</i> and Integrated Physics and Chemistry)	4 credits (Must include <i>Biology</i> & two of: Integrated Physics and Chemistry, Chemistry, Physics, or Principles of Technology I, plus one listed lab-based course.)	4 credits (Must include <i>Biology</i> , <i>Chemistry</i> , <i>Physics</i> , plus one listed lab-based course. May not include IPC)
SOCIAL STUDIES	2 ½ credits World History or World Geography, US History Studies Since Reconstruction (1 credit each); and US Government (1/2 credit)	3 ½ credits World History, World Geography, US History Studies Since Reconstruction (1 credit each); and US Government (1/2 credit)	3 ½ credits World History, World Geography, US History Studies Since Reconstruction (1 credit each); and US Government (1/2 credit)
ECONOMICS	½ credit	½ credit	½ credit
LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH	None	2 credits in same language	3 credits in same language
HEALTH EDUCATION	½ credits	½ credits	½ credits
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	1 ½ credits	1 ½ credits	1 ½ credits
FINE ARTS	None	1 credit	1 credit
TECHNOLOGY APPLICATIONS	1 credit	1 credit	1 credit
SPEECH	½ credit (must be Communications Applications)	½ credit (must be Communications Applications)	½ credit (must be Communications Applications)
ELECTIVES	1 credit (academic) Must be selected from <i>World History Studies</i> , <i>World Geography Studies</i> , or any science course approved by the SBOE 5 ½ credits (any)	3 ½ credits	2 ½ credits
ADVANCED MEASURES	None	None	Must achieve a combination of four (4) of the advanced measures approved by the SBOE
SUBSTITUTIONS	Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) course equivalents may be substituted.		
CREDITS	22	26	26

Certificates of Coursework Completion

A certificate of coursework completion will be issued to a senior student who successfully completes state and local credit requirements for graduation but fails to perform satisfactorily on the exit-level tests.

Students with Disabilities

Upon the recommendation of the admission, review, and dismissal committee, a student with disabilities may be permitted to graduate under the provisions of his or her individualized education program (IEP).

A student who receives special education services and has completed four years of high school, but has not met the requirements of his or her IEP, may participate in graduation ceremonies and receive a certificate of attendance. Even if the student participates in graduation ceremonies to receive the certificate of attendance, he or she may remain enrolled to complete the IEP and earn his or her high school diploma; however, the student will only be allowed to participate in one graduation ceremony.

[See FMH(LEGAL)]

Graduation Activities

Graduation activities will include commencement rehearsal and the commencement. Students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Placement (DAEP) or Expulsion may not participate in school graduation activities.

Graduation Speakers

Graduating students may be given an opportunity to provide opening and closing remarks during the graduation ceremony. Only currently enrolled, graduating students who are in good academic and conduct standing will be eligible to give these remarks.

Students eligible to give the opening and closing remarks will be notified by the principal and given an opportunity to volunteer. In the event there are more eligible students volunteering than there are speaking roles at the graduation ceremony, the names of all eligible students who volunteered shall be randomly drawn. The student whose name is drawn first will give the opening remarks and the student whose name is drawn second will give the closing remarks.

In addition to the opening and closing remarks, the Valedictorian and Salutatorian may also have speaking roles at the graduation ceremony.

[For student speakers at other school events, see STUDENT SPEAKERS on page 47.]

[See FNA(LOCAL).]

Non-student graduation speakers must be preapproved by the principal or superintendent. We encourage selection of graduation speakers from Newcastle High School graduates from five or more years previous and **retired** Newcastle ISD teachers.

Graduation Expenses

Because students and parents will incur expenses in order to participate in the traditions of graduation—such as the purchase of invitations, senior ring, cap and gown, and senior picture—both student and parent should monitor progress toward completion of all requirements for graduation. The expenses often are incurred in the junior year or first semester of the senior year. [See **Student Fees** on page 28.]

State Scholarships and Grants

- Under the Texas Early High School Graduation Scholarship Program, students who complete the Recommended or Distinguished Achievement (Advanced) High School Program may earn financial credits in varying amounts to apply toward college tuition. The amounts depend on the number of consecutive months in which the student completed graduation requirements and the number of early college credits earned and may be used at public or private higher education institutions within the state. The counselor can provide additional information about meeting the program's eligibility requirements.
- Students who have a financial need according to federal criteria and who complete the Recommended High School Program or Distinguished Achievement Program (Advanced) may be eligible under the T.E.X.A.S. Grant Program for tuition and fees to Texas public universities, community colleges, and technical schools, as well as to private institutions. Yearly funding for this program is at the discretion of the Texas Legislature. [For further information, see the principal or counselor and policy EJ(LEGAL).]
- Students are encouraged to contact the school counselor, Teresa Koonsman, early for applicable scholarship information.

Earnest and Lola Remington Scholarship

Newcastle graduates attending Texas Tech University may qualify for the Earnest and Lola Remington Scholarship. Interested senior students should contact Texas Tech University and apply before February 15. All graduating seniors planning to pursue post-secondary education should complete the FAFSA form for financial assistance before graduation. Students may contact the Newcastle High School guidance counselor or principal for assistance.

HARASSMENT

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 21.]

HEALTH-RELATED MATTERS

Physical Activity for Students in Elementary and Middle School

In accordance with policies at EHAB, EHAC, and FFA, the district will ensure that students in elementary school engage in at least 30 minutes of physical activity per day or 135 minutes per week.

The district offers 45 minutes of daily physical activity to students in middle or junior high school to meet district physical education requirements for these grades. For additional information on the district's requirements and programs regarding elementary, middle, and junior high school student physical activity requirements, please see the principal.

School Health Advisory Council

Information regarding the District's School Health Advisory Council, including the number of meetings scheduled or held during the year and information regarding vending machines in District facilities and student access to the machines is available from the principal. [See also policies BDF and EHAA.]

Physical Fitness Assessment

Annually, the district will conduct a physical fitness assessment of students in grades 3–12. At the end of the school year, a parent may submit a written request to the principal to obtain the results of his or her child's physical fitness assessment conducted during the school year.

Vending Machines

The district has adopted policies and implemented procedures to comply with state and federal food service guidelines for restricting student access to vending machines. For more information regarding these policies and guidelines see the principal. [See policies at CO and FFA.]

Other Health-Related Matters

Tobacco Prohibited

The district and its staff strictly enforce prohibitions against the use of tobacco products by students and others on school property and at school-sponsored and school-related activities. [See the *Student Code of Conduct* and policies at FNCD and GKA.]

Asbestos Management Plan

The district's Asbestos Management Plan, designed to be in compliance with state and federal regulations, and is available in the Superintendent's office. If you have any questions, please contact Gordon Grubbs.

Pest Management Plan

The district applies only pest control products that comply with state and federal guidelines. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before application. Parents who want to be notified prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may contact Gordon Grubbs.

HOMELESS STUDENTS

For more information on services for homeless students, contact the district's Liaison for Homeless Children and Youths, Gordon Grubbs, at 940-846-3531.

HOMEWORK

HOMEWORK GUIDELINES (Enrichment and Reinforcement of Learning)

The Newcastle Independent School District believes that homework is an integral part of the instructional programs and learning experiences articulated throughout the PreK-12 curriculum. Homework is an effective academic tool that is vital to students' academic success and can have significant positive effects on student learning. Newcastle Independent School District recognizes the classroom environment as the primary instructional center. However, most homework is accomplished at home where parents can support student learning through homework achievement. Newcastle Independent School District recognizes and respects the importance of quality family time. It is not the intent of this policy to significantly impact the family during holiday celebrations and/or school vacations throughout the school calendar year. Homework assignments should be carefully planned and assigned with respect to family needs as well as student learning.

The potential power of homework is directly related to the quality and evenly planned distribution of assignments. Homework is defined as those activities and assignments that students prepare outside of the classroom. Newcastle Independent School District further supports homework:

- A. Study skills and habits: Homework assignments designed to improve skills such as concentration, discipline, note taking, reading for understanding, and reading for pleasure.
- B. Practice/Review: Homework assignments designed to reinforce material presented in class and/or develop mastery of skills.
- C. Preparation: Homework assignments designed to introduce material that will be helpful in understanding future instruction.
- D. Skill Integration: Homework assignments designed to utilize separately learned skills and concepts and apply them in the completion of a single product such as a book report, science project, or writing assignment.
- E. Extension: Homework assignments designed to transfer previously learned skills and concepts to other situations such as making real world and cross-curricular connections.

IMMUNIZATION

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical reasons or reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, the student will not be immunized. For exemptions based on reasons of conscience, only official forms issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Immunization Branch, can be honored by the district. This form may be obtained by writing the DSHS Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347; or online at <https://webds.dshs.state.tx.us/immco/affidavit.shtm>. The form must be notarized and submitted to the principal or school nurse within 90 days of notarization. If the parent is seeking an exemption for more than one student in the family, a separate form must be provided for each student.

The immunizations required are: diphtheria, rubeola (measles), rubella (German measles), mumps, tetanus, pertussis, poliomyelitis (polio), hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and varicella (chicken pox). The school nurse can provide information on age-appropriate doses or on an acceptable physician-validated history of illness required by the Department of State Health Services. Proof of immunization may be established by personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation.

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student or parent must present a certificate signed by a U.S. licensed physician stating that, in the doctor's opinion, the immunization required poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the student or member of the student's family or household. This certificate must be renewed yearly unless the physician specifies a life-long condition. [For further information, see policy FFAB(LEGAL) and the Department of State Health Services Web site: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/default.shtm>.]

LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Questioning of Students

When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a student at school, the principal will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the interview, if the questioning or interview is part of a child abuse investigation. In other circumstances:

- The principal will verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority and ask for an explanation of the need to question or interview the student at school.
- The principal ordinarily will make reasonable efforts to notify the parents unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.
- The principal ordinarily will be present unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.

Students Taken Into Custody

State law requires the district to permit a student to be taken into legal custody:

- To comply with an order of the juvenile court.
- To comply with the laws of arrest.
- By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision.
- By a probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court.
- By an authorized representative of Child Protective Services, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the conditions set out in the Family Code relating to the student's physical health or safety.

- To comply with a properly issued directive to take a student into custody.

Before a student is released to a law enforcement officer or other legally authorized person, the principal will verify the officer's identity and, to the best of his or her ability, will verify the official's authority to take custody of the student.

The principal will immediately notify the superintendent and will ordinarily attempt to notify the parent unless the officer or other authorized person raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection to notifying the parents. Because the principal does not have the authority to prevent or delay a student's release to a law enforcement officer, any notification will most likely be after the fact.

Notification of Law Violations

The district is required by state law to notify:

- All instructional and support personnel who have responsibility for supervising a student who has been arrested or referred to the juvenile court for any felony offense or for certain misdemeanors.
- All instructional and support personnel who have regular contact with a student who has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred adjudication, or was adjudicated for delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors.

[For further information, see policy GRA(LEGAL).]

MAKEUP WORK

Routine and In-depth Makeup Work Assignments

For any class missed, the teacher may assign the student makeup work based on the instructional objectives for the subject or course and the needs of the individual student in mastering the essential knowledge and skills or in meeting subject or course requirements.

A student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher, generally within three days of returning to school for all unplanned absences. Work for preplanned absences should be completed before the scheduled absence. [For further information, see policy EIAB(LOCAL).]

A student who does not make up assigned work within the time allotted by the teacher will receive a grade of zero for the assignment.

A student will be permitted to make up tests and to turn in projects due in any class missed because of absence. Teachers may assign a late penalty to any long-term project in accordance with time lines approved by the principal and previously communicated to students.

DAEP or In-school Suspension Makeup Work

A student removed to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) during the school year will have an opportunity to complete, before the beginning of the next school year, coursework needed to fulfill the student's high school graduation requirements. The district may provide the opportunity to complete the coursework through an alternative method, including a correspondence course, distance learning, or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district. [See policy FOCA(LEGAL).]

A student removed from the regular classroom to in-school suspension or another setting, other than a DAEP, will have an opportunity to complete before the beginning of the next school year each course the student was enrolled in at the time of removal from the regular classroom. The district may provide the opportunity by any method available, including a correspondence course, distance learning, or summer school. [See policy FEA(LEGAL).]

Students and their parents are encouraged to discuss options with the teacher or counselor to ensure the student completes all work required for the course or grade level.

MEDICINE AT SCHOOL

District employees will not give a student prescription medication, nonprescription medication, herbal substances, anabolic steroids, or dietary supplements, with the following exceptions:

- Only authorized employees, in accordance with policies at FFAC, may administer:
 - Prescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent, along with a written request.
 - Prescription medication from a properly labeled unit dosage container filled by a registered nurse or another qualified district employee from the original, properly labeled container.
 - Nonprescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent along with a written request.
 - Herbal or dietary supplements provided by the parent only if required by the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.
- In certain emergency situations, the district will maintain and administer to a student nonprescription medication, but only:
 - In accordance with the guidelines developed with the district's medical advisor; and
 - When the parent has previously provided written consent to emergency treatment on the district's form.

A student with asthma or severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) may be permitted to possess and use prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school or school-related events only if he or she has written authorization from his or her parent and a physician

or other licensed health-care provider. The student must also demonstrate to his or her physician or health-care provider and to the school nurse the ability to use the prescribed medication, including any device required to administer the medication.

If the student has been prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication for use during the school day, the student and parents should discuss this with the school nurse or principal.

In accordance with a student's individual health plan for management of diabetes, a student with diabetes will be permitted to possess and use monitoring and treatment supplies and equipment while at school or at a school-related activity. See the school nurse or principal for information. [See policy FFAF(LEGAL).]

Psychotropic Drugs

A psychotropic drug is a substance used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication. It is intended to have an altering effect on perception, emotion, or behavior and is commonly described as a mood- or behavior-altering substance.

Teachers and other district employees may discuss a student's academic progress or behavior with the student's parents or another employee as appropriate; however, they are not permitted to recommend use of psychotropic drugs. A district employee who is a registered nurse, an advanced nurse practitioner, a physician, or a certified or credentialed mental health professional can recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate. [For further information, see policies at FFAC.]

NONTRADITIONAL ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

[See **Requirements for a Diploma** on page 30.]

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS / HEALTH SCREENINGS

All students who participate in the Newcastle ISD athletic program will be required to have a physical in grades 6 or 7, 9 and 11.

PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE AND A MINUTE OF SILENCE

Each school day, students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. Parents may submit a written request to the principal to excuse their child from reciting a pledge.

One minute of silence will follow recitation of the pledges. Each student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity during that minute so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others. [See policy EC(LEGAL) for more information.]

PRAYER

Each student has a right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt instructional or other activities of the school. The school will not encourage, require, or coerce a student to engage in or to refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

A student will be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade level. To earn credit in a course, a student must receive a grade of at least 70 based on course-level or grade-level standards.

GRADES 1-5 In grades 1-5, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas and a grade of 70 or above in language arts and mathematics.

GRADES 6-8 In grades 6-8, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas and a grade of 70 or above in language arts and mathematics and a grade of 70 or above in either science or social studies.

GRADES 9-12 Grade-level advancement for students in grades 9-12 shall be earned by course credits. [See EI]

In addition, at certain grade levels a student—with limited exceptions—will be required to pass the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), if the student is enrolled in a public Texas school on any day between January 1 and April 15 and is a Texas resident during the week that the TAKS is administered the first time.

- In order to be promoted to grade 4, students must perform satisfactorily on the reading section of the grade 3 assessments in English or Spanish.
- In order to be promoted to grade 6, students enrolled in grade 5 must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade 5 assessments in English or Spanish.
- In order to be promoted to grade 9, students enrolled in grade 8 must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade 8 assessments in English.

Parents of a student in grade 3, 5, or 8 who does not perform satisfactorily on his or her exams will be notified that their child will participate in special instructional programs designed to improve performance. Such students will have two additional opportunities to take the test. If a student fails a second time, a grade placement committee, consisting of the principal or designee, the teacher, and the student's parent, will determine the additional special instruction the student will receive. After a third failed attempt, the student will be retained; however, the parent can appeal this decision to the committee. In order for the student to be promoted, based on standards previously established by the district, the decision of the committee must be unanimous. Whether the student is retained or promoted, an educational plan for the student will be designed to enable the student to perform at grade level by the end of the next school year. [See policies at EIE.]

Certain students—some with disabilities and some with limited English proficiency—may be eligible for exemptions, accommodations, or deferred testing. For more information, see the principal, counselor, or special education director.

A Personal Graduation Plan (PGP) will be prepared for any student in a middle school or beyond who did not perform satisfactorily on a state-mandated assessment or is determined by the district as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year following enrollment in grade 9. The PGP will be designed and implemented by a guidance counselor, teacher, or other staff member designated by the principal. The plan will, among other items, identify the student’s educational goals, address the parent’s educational expectations for the student, and outline an intensive instruction program for the student. [For additional information, see the principal and policy EIF(LEGAL).]

RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL

Because class time is important, doctor’s appointments should be scheduled, if possible, at times when the student will not miss instructional time.

A student who will need to leave school during the day must bring a note from his or her parent that morning and follow the campus sign-out procedures before leaving the campus. Otherwise, a student will not be released from school at times other than at the end of the school day. Unless the principal has granted approval because of extenuating circumstances, a student will not regularly be released before the end of the instructional day.

If a student becomes ill during the school day, the student should receive permission from the teacher before reporting to the school nurse. The nurse will decide whether or not the student should be sent home and will notify the student’s parent.

REPORT CARDS / PROGRESS REPORTS AND CONFERENCES

Report cards with each student’s grades or performance and absences in each class or subject are issued to parents at least once every nine weeks.

At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period or during the fourth week of a nine-week grading period, parents will be given a written progress report if their child’s performance in any course is near or below 70, or is below the expected level of performance. If the student receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent will be requested to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject and the student will be required to attend tutorials. [See **Working Together** on page 1 for how to schedule a conference.]

Teachers follow grading guidelines that have been approved by the principal and are designed to reflect each student’s academic achievement for the grading period, semester, or course. State law provides that a test or course grade issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless the board determines that the grade was arbitrary or contains an error, or that the teacher did not follow the district’s grading policy. [See policy EIA(LOCAL).]

Questions about grade calculation should first be discussed with the teacher; if the question is not resolved, the student or parent may request a conference with the principal in accordance with FNG(LOCAL).

Tutorials are required for a student who receives a grade lower than 70 in a class or subject.

Report cards and unsatisfactory progress reports must be signed by the parent and should be returned to the first period teacher within 3 days.

RETALIATION

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 21.]

SAFETY

Student safety on campus and at school-related events is a high priority of the district. Although the district has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensuring school safety. A student should:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or other students at risk.
- Follow the behavioral standards in this handbook and the *Student Code of Conduct*, as well as any additional rules for behavior and safety set by the principal, teachers, or bus drivers.
- Remain alert to and promptly report to a teacher or the principal any safety hazards, such as intruders on campus or threats made by any person toward a student or staff member.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other district employees who are overseeing the welfare of students.

Accident Insurance

Soon after the school year begins, parents will have the opportunity to purchase low-cost accident insurance that would help meet medical expenses in the event of injury to their child.

Drills: Fire, Tornado, and Other Emergencies

From time to time, students, teachers, and other district employees will participate in drills of emergency procedures. When the alarm is sounded, students should follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

Fire Drill Bells

3 bells	leave the building
1 bell	halt; stand at attention
2 bells	return to the classroom

Tornado Drill Bells

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 4 bells | move quietly but quickly to the designated locations |
| 2 bells | return to the classroom |

Emergency Medical Treatment and Information

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity when the parent cannot be reached, the school would need to have written parental consent to obtain emergency medical treatment, and information about allergies to medications, foods, insect bites, etc. Therefore, parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Parents should keep emergency care information up-to-date (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.). Please contact the school nurse to update any information that the nurse or the teacher needs to know.

Emergency School-Closing Information

The school will issue school closing information to the local radio station (KSWA 1330AM or KWKQ 97.4 FM) as soon as a decision has been made and the radio stations have been notified.

SAT, ACT, AND OTHER STANDARDIZED TESTS

Many colleges require either the American College Test (ACT) or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) for admission. Students are encouraged to talk with the counselor early during their junior year to determine the appropriate exam to take; these exams are usually taken at the end of the junior year. (Prior to enrollment in a Texas public college or university, most students must take a standardized test, such as the Texas Higher Education Assessment [THEA]).

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Food and Drinks in the Building

No food or drinks will be taken into the building during the school day unless approved by Cathryn Creel.

Use By Students Before and After School

Certain areas of the school will be accessible to students before and after school for specific purposes. Students are required to remain in the area where their activity is scheduled to take place.

Students arriving at school before 7:30 should go directly to the school library.

The following areas are open to students before school, beginning at 7:35 a.m.

- Grades K-5 on the east end of the building or on the playground
- Grades 6-8 in the gym foyer.
- Grades 9-12 on the pavilion in back of the school.

Unless the teacher or sponsor overseeing the activity gives permission, a student will not be permitted to go to another area of the building or campus.

After dismissal of school in the afternoon, and unless involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher, students must leave campus immediately.

Conduct Before and After School

Teachers and administrators have full authority over student conduct at before- or after-school activities on district premises and at school-sponsored events off district premises, such as play rehearsals, club meetings, athletic practices, and special study groups or tutorials. Students are subject to the same rules of conduct that apply during the instructional day and will be subject to consequences established by the *Student Code of Conduct* or any stricter standards of behavior established by the sponsor for extracurricular participants.

Use of Hallways During Class Time

Loitering or standing in the halls during class is not permitted. During class time, a student must have a hall pass to be outside the classroom for any purpose. Failure to obtain a pass will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*.

Cafeteria Services

The district participates in the National School Lunch Program and offers students nutritionally balanced lunches daily. Free and reduced-price lunches are available based on financial need. Information about a student's participation is confidential. See Dolores Osborn to apply. **Free and reduced-priced lunch forms must be completed by the parent, signed, and returned to Gayle Bailey by Tuesday September 2, 2008, or the student will be confined to campus for the lunch period until the forms are returned.**

Our cafeteria is under the supervision of competent workers who are striving to give the best products and services possible to students. Conduct in the cafeteria is expected to be courteous and orderly. Rules for the cafeteria include the following:

- Enter the cafeteria appropriately
- Wait your turn in line politely
- Speak in a normal tone of voice
- Express your thanks to the cafeteria staff
- Leave tables neat with all trash in the proper receptacle
- Lunch charges will not be permitted.

Due to our participation in a federal breakfast program, we provide a free student breakfast.

School lunch prices for 2008-2009:

Breakfast reduced	\$0.30	(established federally)
Breakfast full pay	\$1.75	
Adult Breakfast	\$1.75	
Lunch reduced	\$0.40	(established federally)
Lunch full pay	\$2.50	
Adult lunch	\$3.00	

The district follows the federal and state guidelines regarding foods of minimal nutritional value being served or sold on school premises during the school day. [For more information, see policy CO(LEGAL).]

Library

The library is a learning laboratory with books, computers, magazines, and other materials available for classroom assignments, projects, and reading or listening pleasure. The library is open for student use Monday through Friday from 7:00AM until 4:00PM.

Meetings of Non-curriculum-Related Groups

Student-organized, student-led non-curriculum-related groups are permitted to meet during the hours designated by the principal before and after school. These groups must comply with the requirements of policy FNAB(LOCAL).

A list of these groups is available in the principal's office.

SEARCHES

In the interest of promoting student safety and attempting to ensure that schools are safe and drug free, district officials may from time to time conduct searches. Such searches are conducted without a warrant and as permitted by law.

Students' Desks and Lockers

Students' desks and lockers are school property and remain under the control and jurisdiction of the school even when assigned to an individual student.

Students are fully responsible for the security and contents of their assigned desks and lockers. Students must be certain that their lockers are locked, and that the combinations are not available to others.

Searches of desks or lockers may be conducted at any time there is reasonable cause to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by policy, whether or not a student is present.

The parent will be notified if any prohibited items are found in the student's desk or locker.

Vehicles on Campus

Vehicles parked on school property are under the jurisdiction of the school. School officials may search any vehicle any time there is reasonable cause to do so, with or without the permission of the student. A student has full responsibility for the security and content of his or her vehicle and must make certain that it is locked and that the keys

are not given to others. Only legally licensed drivers may drive and park their vehicles on campus during school hours or during extracurricular activities. Known violators will be reported to law enforcement officials and parents will be notified. Student vehicles parked on school grounds may not display inappropriate messages. Students will be asked to remove the message in order to maintain parking privileges. Safety on campus is a high priority, any student driver that drives in an unsafe manner (in the judgment of a school administrator) will not be allowed the privilege of driving on campus. [See also the *Student Code of Conduct*.]

Trained Dogs

The district will use trained dogs to alert school officials to the presence of prohibited or illegal items, including drugs and alcohol. At any time, trained dogs may be used around lockers and the areas around vehicles parked on school property. Searches of classrooms, common areas, or student belongings may also be conducted by trained dogs when students are not present. An item in a classroom, a locker, or a vehicle to which a trained dog alerts may be searched by school officials.

Metal Detectors

[For further information, see policy FNF(LOCAL).]

Drug-Testing

[For further information, see policy FNF(LOCAL).]

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

The district provides special programs for gifted and talented students, homeless students, bilingual students, migrant students, students with limited English proficiency, dyslexic students, and students with disabilities. The coordinator of each program can answer questions about eligibility requirements, as well as programs and services offered in the district or by other organizations. A student or parent with questions about these programs should contact Gayle Bailey.

STEROIDS

State law prohibits students from possessing, dispensing, delivering, or administering an anabolic steroid. Anabolic steroids are for medical use only, and only a physician can prescribe use.

Bodybuilding, muscle enhancement, or the increase of muscle bulk or strength through the use of an anabolic steroid or human growth hormone by a healthy student is not a valid medical use and is a criminal offense.

Students participating in UIL athletic competition may be subject to random steroid testing. More information on the UIL testing program may be found on the UIL Web site at http://www.uil.utexas.edu/athletics/health/steroid_information.html.

STUDENT SPEAKERS

The district provides students the opportunity to introduce the following school events: pep rallies and some school assemblies. Students are eligible to introduce these events if they are enrolled as a student in Newcastle ISD and are in good academic and conduct standing. Eligible students that wish to volunteer to introduce on the events listed above should submit his or her name to the principal during the first week of the fall semester and/or spring semester. The names of all students who volunteered will be randomly drawn and matched to the event for which the student will give the introduction. If the selected student speaker declines or becomes ineligible, then no student introduction will be made at that event. The selection of students to introduce school events will occur at the beginning of each semester.

As determined by the principal, students who have been selected for special honors, such as captain of an athletic team, student council officers, leaders of school-sponsored organizations, homecoming king or queen, or prom king or queen may also address school audiences at designated events. Morning announcements, pledge, and moment of silence are announced daily by the student council representatives of students in grades 9-12.

[See FNA(LOCAL)]

SUMMER SCHOOL

The District may provide access to summer school for students and for Limited English Proficient students according to legal requirements. See EHDA (LOCAL), EHBC (LEGAL), and EIE (LEGAL).

State law requires attendance in an accelerated reading instruction program when kindergarten, first grade, or second grade students are assigned to such a program. Parents will be notified in writing if their child is assigned to an accelerated reading instruction program as a result of the reading diagnosis test.

TAKS (TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS)

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students at certain grade levels will take state-mandated tests (such as TAKS: the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills) in the following subjects:

- Mathematics, annually in grades 3–11
- Reading, annually in grades 3–9
- Writing, including spelling and grammar, in grades 4 and 7
- English language arts in grades 10 and 11
- Social studies in grades 8, 10, and 11
- Science in grades 5, 8, 10, and 11
- Any other subject and grade required by federal law

[See policy EKB(LEGAL).]

TARDINESS

A student who is tardy to class by more than 20 minutes will be counted absent. Students will be allowed 3 tardies per nine weeks grading period with each tardy after 3 resulting in a forty-seven minute lunch detention. Failure to report for lunch detention will result in ten days of closed campus for lunch. Persistent tardy offenses will result in more severe consequences.

TEXTBOOKS

State-approved textbooks are provided to students free of charge for each subject or class. Books must be covered by the student, as directed by the teacher, and treated with care. A student who is issued a damaged book should report the damage to the teacher. Any student failing to return a book issued by the school loses the right to free textbooks until the book is returned or paid for by the parent; however, the student will be provided textbooks for use at school during the school day.

TRANSFERS

Students requesting an out-of –district transfer to Newcastle ISD should complete a transfer application, including a current transcript, testing, attendance history, and discipline history. The transfer committee is appointed yearly and reviews each transfer request.

[See **Other Parental Rights**, on page 2, and **Options and Requirements for Providing Assistance to Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need or May Need Special Education**, on page 6, for other transfer options.]

TRANSPORTATION

School-Sponsored Trips

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by the school to and from the event. The principal, however, may make an exception if the parent makes a written request that the student be released to the parent or to another adult designated by the parent.

Buses and Other School Vehicles

The district makes school bus transportation available to all students living two or more miles from school. This service is provided at no cost to students. Bus routes and any subsequent changes are posted at the school.

A parent may also designate a child-care facility or grandparent’s residence as the regular pickup and drop-off location for his or her child. The designated facility or residence must be on an approved stop on an approved route. For information on bus routes and stops or to designate an alternate pickup or drop-off location, you may contact the Superintendent at 940-846-3531.

See the *Student Code of Conduct* for provisions regarding transportation to the Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP).

Students are expected to assist district staff in ensuring that buses remain in good condition and that transportation is provided safely. When riding in district vehicles, students are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook and the *Student Code of Conduct*. Students must:

- Follow the driver's directions at all times.
- Enter and leave the bus or Suburban in an orderly manner at the designated stop nearest home.
- Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
- Not deface the bus, Suburban, or its equipment.
- Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the bus or Suburban.
- Not possess or use any form of tobacco on school buses.
- Observe all usual classroom rules.
- Be seated while the vehicle is moving.
- Wait for the driver's signal upon leaving the bus or Suburban and before crossing in front of the vehicle.

When students ride in a district Suburban or passenger car, seat belts must be fastened at all times.

Misconduct will be punished in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*; bus-riding (Suburban riding) privileges may be suspended.

VANDALISM

The taxpayers of the community have made a sustained financial commitment for the construction and upkeep of school facilities. To ensure that school facilities can serve those for whom they are intended—both this year and for years to come—littering, defacing, or damaging school property is not tolerated. Students will be required to pay for damages they cause and will be subject to criminal proceedings as well as disciplinary consequences in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*.

VIDEO CAMERAS

For safety purposes, video/audio equipment may be used to monitor student behavior on buses and in common areas on campus. Students will not be told when the equipment is being used. Students may not alter video equipment.

The principal will review the video/audio recordings routinely and document student misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*.

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL

General Visitors

Parents and others are welcome to visit. For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, all visitors must first report to the principal's office and display a visitor pass.

Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with prior approval of the principal and teacher and only so long as their duration or frequency does not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the normal school environment.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct; disruptive behavior will not be permitted.

WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL

A student under 18 may be withdrawn from school only by a parent. The school requests notice from the parent at least three days in advance so that records and documents may be prepared. The parent may obtain a withdrawal form from the principal's office.

On the student's last day, the withdrawal form must be presented to each teacher for current grade averages and book clearance; to the librarian to ensure a clear library record; to the clinic for health records; to the counselor for the last report card and course clearance; and finally, to the principal. A copy of the withdrawal form will be given to the student, and a copy will be placed in the student's permanent record.

A student who is 18 or older, who is married, or who has been declared by a court to be an emancipated minor, may withdraw without parental signature.

GLOSSARY

Accelerated instruction is an intensive supplemental program designed to address the needs of an individual student in acquiring the knowledge and skills required at his or her grade level.

ACT refers to one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions exams: the American College Test. The test may be a requirement for admission to certain colleges or universities.

Alternative assessment instrument, developed by the state, may be given to students in special education and students identified as limited English proficient.

ARD is the admission, review, and dismissal committee convened for each student who is identified as needing a full and individual evaluation for special education services. The eligible student's parents are part of the committee.

Attendance Review Committee is responsible for reviewing a student's absences when the student's attendance drops below 90 percent of the days the class is offered. Under guidelines adopted by the board, the committee will determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences and whether the student needs to complete certain conditions to master the course and regain credit lost because of absences.

DAEP stands for disciplinary alternative education program, a placement for students who have violated certain provisions of the *Student Code of Conduct*. Students in the DAEP will be separated from students not assigned to the program. The DAEP will focus instruction on English language arts, mathematics, science, history, and self-discipline, and provide for students' educational and behavior needs, as well as supervision and counseling.

FERPA refers to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act that grants specific privacy protections to student records. The law contains certain exceptions, such as for directory information, unless a student's parent or a student 18 or older directs the school not to release directory information.

IEP is the written record of the Individualized Education Program prepared by the ARD committee for a student with disabilities who is eligible for special education services. The IEP contains several parts, such as a statement of the student's present educational performance; a statement of measurable annual goals, with short-term objectives; the special education and related services and supplemental aids and services to be provided, and program modifications or support by school personnel; a statement regarding how the student's progress will be measured and how the parents will be kept informed; modifications to state or districtwide tests, etc.

ISS refers to in-school suspension, a disciplinary technique for misconduct found in the *Student Code of Conduct*. Although different from out-of-school suspension and placement in a DAEP, ISS removes the student from the regular classroom.

NCLB Act is the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Personal Graduation Plan (PGP) is required by state law for any student in middle school or higher who fails a section on a state-mandated test or is identified by the district

as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year after he or she begins grade 9.

SAT refers to one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions exams: the Scholastic Aptitude Test. The test may be a requirement for admissions to certain colleges or universities.

Section 504 is the federal law that prohibits discrimination against a student with a disability, requiring schools to provide opportunities for equal services, programs, and participation in activities. Unless the student is determined by an ARD committee to be eligible for special education services, appropriate regular educational services will be provided.

State-mandated tests are required of students at certain grade levels and in specified subjects. Successful performance sometimes is a condition of promotion, and passing the grade 11 exit-level test is a condition of graduation. Students have multiple opportunities to take the tests if necessary for promotion or graduation.

Student Code of Conduct is developed with the advice of the district-level committee and adopted by the board; identifies the circumstances, consistent with law, when a student may be removed from the classroom or campus. It also sets out the conditions that authorize or require the principal or another administrator to place the student in a DAEP. It outlines conditions for out-of-school suspension and for expulsion, and states whether self-defense is a consideration in suspension, DAEP placement, or expulsion. The *Student Code of Conduct* also addresses notice to the parent regarding a student's violation of one of its provisions.

TAKS is short for the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, the state's standardized achievement test currently given to students in certain subjects in grades 3–11.

UIL refers to the University Interscholastic League, the statewide voluntary nonprofit organization that oversees educational extracurricular academic, athletic, and music contests.

APPENDIX II: Use of Student Work in District Publications

Occasionally, the Newcastle Independent School District wishes to display or publish student artwork or special projects on the district's Web site and in district publications. The district agrees to only use these student projects in this manner.

Parent: Please circle one of the choices below:

I, parent of _____ (student's name), **(do give)**
(do not give) the district permission to use my child's artwork or special
project on the district's Web site and in district publications.

Parent signature: _____

Date: _____